

REMARKS

In response to the final Office action mail-dated 20 January 2004, reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Although no filing fees are anticipated in association with the instantly filed paper, the Office is respectfully requested to charge any fees as may be required, and to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-0958.

Preliminarily, Applicant respectfully infers that the Office accepts the drawings that were originally filed on 10/04/01, albeit it does not appear to Applicant that the Office has expressly indicated such.

By the instant *After-Final Amendment*, Applicant amends claims 1, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 31. Claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10-16 and 18-31 remain in the application, wherein claims 1, 8, 14, 22 and 24 remain the independent claims.

As more specifically discussed hereinbelow, Applicant believes that the claims as presently amended are free of indefiniteness and informality.

Claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10-13, 28 and 29 are objected to because of informalities existing in independent claims 1 and 8.

In view of the claim amendments herein, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the claim objections.

By amendment herein, claims 1 and 10-12 now consistently

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recite the word "interposed" immediately preceding the phrase "streamlined resilient element."

Regarding claim 1, with due respect, Applicant hesitates to change the language "said streamlined resilient element" to the language "said at least one streamlined resilient element" at line 20 of claim 1. Applicant respectfully suggests that, in this instance, the phraseology "said streamlined resilient element" (versus the phraseology "said at least one streamlined resilient element") is appropriately used in a context of particularity to an individual streamlined resilient element. Applicant respectfully urges that independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 4, 7 and 8 are not defective in terms of informality.

Claims 1-4, 7, 11, 12, 28, 29 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In view of the claim amendments herein, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

By amendment herein, claim 1 now resolves the noted problem relating to the phrase "the same."

By amendment herein, claims 11 and 31 now remove the noted improprieties regarding antecedent basis.

Claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 28, 29 and 31 are indicated to be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the afore-noted objections and rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as applicable.

Applicant appreciates the Office's favorable consideration of claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 28, 29 and 31. In view of the afore-noted claim amendments herein, Applicant believes that claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 28, 29 and 31 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 14-16, 18-27 and 30 are allowed.

Applicant appreciates the Office's favorable consideration of claims 14-16, 18-27 and 30.

In consideration of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests -- in addition to allowance of claims 14-16, 18-27 and 30 -- allowance of claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 28, 29 and 31. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests Notice of Allowance as to claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10-16 and 18-31.

If any questions remain, the Examiner is respectfully invited to call the undersigned at telephone number 301-227-1834.

Respectfully submitted,



HOWARD KAISER
Reg. No. 31,381
ATTORNEY FOR APPLICANT

01/29/04

date

Office of Counsel (Patents), Code 39, Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division
9500 MacArthur Boulevard, West Bethesda, Maryland 20817-5700
phone (301) 227-1834 fax (301) 227-1958
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